

State of Illinois

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Illinois Department of Natural Resources



Digest of Waterfowl Hunting Regulations 2007-2008

**“Best of Show” 2007 Federal Junior
Duck Stamp Contest**



Calm Waters

by Christina Van Dellen



Illinois
Department of
**Natural
Resources**

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NEW REGULATIONS FOR 2007-2008

New Regulations are shaded.

Canvasback bag limit increased to 2 daily3, 8

White-fronted Goose season and bag limits changed5, 9

Report Waterfowl Bands online at www.reportband.gov11

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Thank you for reviewing the 2007-2008 edition of the Digest of Waterfowl Hunting Regulations from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. It is an important resource for all waterfowlers, with details on season dates, hunting hours, bag limits, hunting zones and other information for those heading to the field this season.

This year's Illinois waterfowl seasons were set based on our best available biological and scientific information, including historical freeze up data, aerial waterfowl survey data, and the results of our extensive waterfowl hunter surveys.

We are pleased with the response from waterfowl hunters to our experiment eliminating goose quotas and quota zones. The change means the season dates we've established are the dates hunters can count on. Canada goose season has been increased in all zones and the season length will not change for the next five years unless the Mississippi Valley Population (MVP) of Canada geese drops dramatically.

Among the things that are still required is registration with the federal Harvest Information Program (HIP). It helps provide more accurate federal waterfowl harvest information. Be sure to register with HIP before you take to the field this fall.

Thanks again for your support of our hunting programs and good luck during the 2007-08 waterfowl season in Illinois.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Flood". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sam Flood, Acting Director
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM

Harvest Information Program (HIP) – Required. This important program is designed to produce more accurate federal harvest estimates which will ultimately improve our ability to maximize hunting opportunity without detriment to the waterfowl resource. You can help preserve your sport by registering with HIP at the license vendor when you purchase your hunting license and state duck stamp. Remember, registration is **MANDATORY**, not optional.

OVERVIEW AND OUTLOOK FOR 2007

Dear Illinois Waterfowl Hunter,

Illinois duck hunters experienced an excellent hunting season last year harvesting the third most ducks recorded since state estimates began in 1981. The new Canada goose hunting experiment was started early by Illinois last year and it resulted in the second highest Canada goose harvest in Illinois history. Hunters were very pleased with the elimination of quotas and despite the high goose harvest the MVP Canada goose breeding population rose to its highest level since 1999. Well that's enough about last year. Let's take a look at what is in store for us this fall.

You will find a great deal of information about our upcoming waterfowl seasons in the paragraphs below. Conditions on the duck breeding grounds were generally very good this year. There were 7 million ponds in prairie Canada and northern U.S. breeding areas. This was 15% greater than last year and 44% above the long term average of 4.9 million ponds. Therefore, Illinois duck hunters will once again be offered a 60-day season. This is the 11th year in a row we have been offered a 60-day duck season. We anticipate a fall duck flight larger than last year's due to very good water levels over a large portion of the breeding grounds. MVP Canada goose breeding numbers are up from last year due to an early spring and production is expected to be even better than last year which was a good year.

In closing, we encourage each of you to take a new young hunter along with you this season. Remember, hunters who come to appreciate and value wildlife at an early age are the foundation upon which the future of wildlife will be built.

We hope you find the information in this digest useful and we wish you a safe and memorable 2007-2008 waterfowl season!

Sincerely,



Mike Conlin
Director, Office of Resource Conservation



John Buhnerkempe
Chief, Division of Wildlife Resources



Ray Marshall
State Waterfowl Biologist

DUCKS

Duck Populations – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) annual survey of key nesting areas indicated 41.2 million breeding ducks, 14% greater than last year's 36.2 million birds, and 24% above the 1955-2006 long-term average. In 2005 there were 31.7 million ducks.

Mallards – The mid-continent mallard fall flight forecast is 11.4 million, which is 1.5 million higher than last year. The fall flight index predicts 2.3 million young mallards will fly south this year compared to 1.9 million last year. That is a 19% increase over last year. Young mallards are generally twice as vulnerable to hunting as adults.

Pintails – The pintail population of 3.3 million was similar to last year. Pintails remain 19% below their long-term average but the population this year was above the threshold of 2.5 million, again justifying a full season length according to the Fish and Wildlife Service's interim pintail harvest strategy. In fact, if the observed breeding population had been farther south the bag limit might have been raised to 2 or 3 since reproduction is much better at lower latitudes.

Canvasbacks – The canvasback population reached a record high population of 865,000 which was 25% higher than last year and 53% over the long-term average. The Service's canvasback harvest strategy's allowable canvasback harvest for 2007 was calculated to be 467,900, whereas the canvasback harvest with a one-bird bag is predicted to be 118,904. If the bag limit was increased to 2, the predicted harvest would be approximately 158,000, which is nearly 310,000 birds below the allowable harvest for 2007. Coupled with the excellent habitat conditions in Prairie Canada (ponds in Prairie Canada were 49% above the long-term average), above average production is expected. As a result the canvasback daily bag limit has been increased to 2 this year. It has been 41 years since the daily bag limit on canvasbacks in Illinois has been as high as 2.

Scaup – Scaup population estimates of 3.45 million increased 6% over last year but are still 33% below the long-term average. The Fish and Wildlife Service decreased the daily bag limit from 3 to 2 in 2005 because of concerns regarding a decreasing population with an increasing harvest rate for the past several years. The Service initially recommended reducing the daily bag limit to one scaup for this season, but eventually approved the Flyway Councils' recommendation to retain the 2-bird limit until a new harvest strategy could be developed and agreed upon prior to the 2008 season. There is no evidence indicating that hunting is the primary cause of scaup declines and many agencies continue to conduct research to solve this mystery.

2006 Duck Harvest – The preliminary state duck harvest estimate of 507,464 was 23% larger than last year (412,348) and was the third highest harvest since state estimates began in 1981. The harvest was 48% above the long term 1981-2005 average (342,302). Preliminary mallard harvest was 308,000, second only to the 1999 harvest of 311,325. On average, duck hunters spent a little over 13 days a field to harvest over 10 ducks per hunter for the season. This annual harvest per hunter is 14% above the previous 5-year average of 8.8 ducks per hunter. The duck harvest per hunter per day last season was 0.77 which is similar to last year and is the second highest daily success rate in the previous 25 years. Harvest of teal during the 2006 September season was 28,016 compared to 10,953 in 2005. The record teal harvest of 55,199 occurred in 1999 when blue-winged teal breeding numbers were similar to this year.

2007 Duck Hunting Outlook – The quality of habitat for breeding waterfowl in the U.S. and Canada is slightly better this year than last year. The estimate of May ponds for Prairie Canada was 5 million compared to 4.4 million last year. This was 13% greater than last year and 49% higher than the long term average. Green-winged teal are the third most harvested duck in Illinois after mallards and wood ducks. Green-winged teal populations increased to the second highest level since 1955 and are 12% over last year and are 54% above the long term average. Substantial increases from last year were also noted for blue-winged teal (6.7 million, +28%) which were at their third highest level recorded. In addition to canvasbacks (see above), redheads (1 million) and shovelers (4.6 million) reached record populations and were 60% and 106% above the long term averages, respectively. Gadwall and American wigeon populations increased 19% and 29%, respectively over last year and were 96% and 8% above their long term averages, respectively. Experienced duck hunters know that individual hunter success is much more dependent on the weather during migration and on local water and food conditions at refuges and hunting areas.

2007 Duck Season Timing and Zone Lines – Preliminary results of the 2006 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey (IWHS) indicate hunters were satisfied with our decision last year on a five-year plan for setting duck seasons in the North and Central zones. Duck season dates in the South Zone were to be reevaluated after the 2006 season, and hunter survey results and other key data were helpful in establishing the dates for the upcoming season. An analysis of six years worth of South Zone aerial duck survey data and a comparison of three early seasons to three late seasons at Carlyle and Rend lakes was conducted. The analyses showed that the starting date of a 60-day season would provide about the same number of ducks and opportunity for hunters for the next 60-days if the season started on November 10 or November 22. Finally, IDNR reviewed preliminary results from the 2006 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey, which indicated 60 percent of South Zone duck hunters preferred that the South Zone duck season begin November 22. Only 37 percent preferred November 10 or earlier. The first firearm deer season weekend of November 17-19 was not listed as an option due to strong preferences from hunters in past years to avoid this conflict.

CANADA GEESE

2007 Spring Survey Results – Late May aerial surveys found 402,640 breeding MVP Canada geese, the highest level since 1999. Indications of an early spring suggest better reproduction on the breeding grounds. Nesting conditions were favorable and it should be another good production year for MVP geese. A higher percentage of young geese in the flock often indicates better hunting. Production of local giant Canada geese is expected to be normal again in Illinois.

MVP Canada geese comprise about 40 percent of the Illinois harvest during the regular waterfowl season. Giant Canada geese comprise about 54 percent (less than half of those from Illinois, with the remainder from other Mississippi Flyway states and provinces). Eastern Prairie Population Canada geese (Manitoba) comprise 5 percent of the Illinois harvest. About 1-2 percent of Illinois' harvest is comprised of small Canada geese which were recently renamed cackling geese.

2007 Canada Goose Harvest Strategy – Based on a new Canada goose harvest management strategy the IDNR implemented a year early last year, the use of a goose harvest quota system has been eliminated. Other states in the MVP Canada goose range including Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky will begin the "no-quota" five-year experiment this season. Goose hunters in Illinois were pleased with the elimination of the goose quota and an assurance that goose seasons would not close early. IDNR received approval from the Fish and Wildlife Service to increase the Canada goose season from last year's 79 days in the North and Central zones to 85 days and from 57 days in the South Zone to 66 days for the next five years. These increased opportunities will be further enhanced by the prospects of a good hatch of MVP Canada geese this summer. These season lengths will continue through 2011 unless there is a large decrease in the MVP Canada goose breeding population. Biologists will carefully monitor breeding populations, harvest rates and survival models for MVP geese to make sure the migratory population is protected. If as a result of the experiment the MVP population of geese is affected negatively below a predetermined point, then the experiment will be cancelled in favor of the old harvest management approach.

2006 Canada Goose Harvest Strategy – The preliminary state Canada goose harvest estimate during the regular season of 122,294 is the second highest recorded since 1981. The record of 128,387 was set in 2000. The average seasonal harvest per hunter was just under 3 Canada geese last year. During the September season hunters took an estimated 14,578 Canada geese.

2007 Canada Goose Season Dates

North Zone: Preliminary results from the 2006 IWHS indicated that 76% of North Zone goose hunters preferred an 85-day season with a 2 goose bag limit compared to 22% who wanted a 90-day season with a 1-geese bag limit for 16 days and a 2-geese bag limit for 74 days. This survey also indicated that 66% of goose hunters preferred a continuous 85-day season compared to 27% who wanted a split season in the North Zone. Goose hunting generally is consistent throughout the season in the North Zone. A deep snowfall might move geese out of the zone in January, a month which typically has more snow and bitter cold weather than December. Therefore there is some risk in splitting the season to extend it much past early January. This year's continuous season ends only 2 days earlier than last year's split season.

Central Zone: Preliminary results from the 2006 IWHS indicated that 58% of goose hunters preferred an 85-day season with a 2 goose bag limit while 40% wanted a 90-day season with a 1-geese bag limit for 16 days and a 2-geese limit for 74 days. This survey also indicated that 71% of Central Zone goose hunters were satisfied with last year's split season which was closed for 18 days; only 15% were dissatisfied. The season only closes for 12 days this year. Previous IWHS indicated that hunters want goose season to open with duck season. A split season is necessary to have goose season open with duck season and close on January 31 with an 85-day season length. Goose migrations into the Central Zone have generally been later than normal the past few years and hunting success generally improves later in the season. More goose hunting opportunities may occur in this zone in late January than early to mid-November.

South Zone: Canada goose season is 66 days with a 5-day closed segment after the first 4-day holiday weekend of duck season. In 2006-07 the season was 57 days and the closed period was 16 days and there were virtually no complaints. The 9-day increase in season length granted by the Fish and Wildlife Service reduced the closed period needed to get to the end of January to only 5 days this year. There is no good reason to delay the start of Canada goose season until after duck season. There are many locations in the South Zone where there are resident geese available when duck season opens and a later opening would educate these geese and make them less vulnerable later. Many duck hunters like to be able to shoot geese while duck hunting.

SNOW GEESE

During the 2007 Midwinter Survey, biologists counted 2,917,100 light geese (snow, blue and Ross' geese), 31% more than in 2006. A late spring occurred on the high arctic where snow, Ross' and cackling (were called small Canada geese until recently) geese breed. Production is expected to be lower than average and much lower than last year. Interesting research by the Canadian Wildlife Service at Karrak Lake located in the high arctic indicated that using banding information, the continental population estimate of light geese approaches a fall flight of 25 million birds during some years. This is much higher than most other estimates or indices that have been made (some were around 5 million). Based on long term research at Karrak Lake, light goose populations control efforts have not reduced numbers of light geese in the northern colonies. Their estimate of light goose numbers and growth rates puts population control efforts in a somewhat different light in terms of the effectiveness of the conservation actions and harvests needed to meet population goals. During last year's regular snow goose season Illinois hunters took an estimated 9,778 snow geese. An estimated 74,268 snow geese were harvested during the 2006 Conservation Order snow goose season. This represents a 69% increase over the 2005 estimated harvest of 43,839 snow geese. Fifty-nine percent of the 2006 harvest occurred in the Central and South Zones during February. Some hunters report better hunting in March when there are fewer snow geese around but a higher percentage of them are young of the year.

WHITE-FRONTED GESE

During the fall 2006 survey in Saskatchewan and Alberta, biologists counted 751,300 Mid-continental Population (MCP) white-fronted geese (a.k.a. "specs"), 43% more than the previous year. During 1996-2006, these estimates have declined an average of 5% per year. Production is expected to be reduced from last year due to spring snow and delayed nesting in many areas of the breeding grounds but a fall flight similar to last year is expected. White-fronted geese were unusually abundant in the Central Zone last January and a record harvest of 4,648 white-fronts was taken statewide, compared to the old record of 2,831. For the first time ever, Central Zone hunters shot more "specs" (2,348) than South Zone hunters (2,042). North Zone hunters took just 166. This year, the Central Zone white-front season has been shortened to allow hunters in that zone to take two white-fronted geese per day, but the season does not start until the day before Thanksgiving. Aerial survey data indicates that there are no appreciable numbers of white-fronts in the Central Zone until about Thanksgiving and populations usually peaked in January. The maximum white-fronted goose season allowed by federal regulations is 86 days with a bag limit of one or 72 days with a bag limit of 2. Thus, the seasons and bag limits in each zone were adjusted to comply with these rules. North Zone hunters will be allowed to take 2 white-fronts also.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has again authorized two consecutive days for the 2007 youth waterfowl hunt. The Youth Waterfowl Hunting dates for the North and Central zones will open the weekend immediately preceding the regular duck season opening date. In the Central zone, aerial survey data on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers combined suggest that there will be about 100,000 more ducks available during the weekend immediately preceding the regular duck season opener than the weekend before that. In the South zone, aerial survey data suggest there will be large numbers of ducks available by the weekend 2 weeks before the regular duck season. In addition, the weekend immediately preceding the regular duck season is the first gun deer season and we did not want youths to lose opportunities due to potential conflicts for them or their parents that weekend. Most waterfowlers know that the average age of the Illinois duck and goose hunter is getting older. That is because few new hunters (especially youth) are being recruited into the sport. If you are concerned about this trend - and all us should be - please take a qualifying young person hunting during the Youth Hunt as well as during the regular season.

AVIAN INFLUENZA AND WILD BIRDS

Many different subtypes of avian influenza virus (bird flu) are found in wild birds, especially waterfowl and shorebirds. In most instances, only a small number of birds become infected and most wild birds do not exhibit observable symptoms of sickness or die. Recently a highly pathogenic form of avian influenza (Asian H5N1) has emerged in Asia and spread to Africa and Europe. The virus has primarily affected domestic poultry operations but some wild birds have also been affected. In addition, humans in Asia, Africa, and Europe have contracted Asian H5N1 causing human mortality in some cases. Human infections are thought to have primarily occurred due to close contact with contaminated domestic poultry, surfaces, or equipment.

Wild migratory birds have not been documented to carry Asian H5N1 between geographic regions. Some mortality events in wild birds have been associated with outbreaks of Asian H5N1 in domestic poultry but it is not known if wild birds were the source of the virus or if the virus was acquired from poultry. Because Asian H5N1 surveillance in wild birds can aid in the early detection of the virus if it arrives in North America, efforts to monitor wild migratory birds for Asian H5N1 have been undertaken. During 2006-2007 the Illinois Department of Natural Resources collected 804 samples from 8 species of waterfowl for avian influenza testing. Four of the samples collected in Illinois tested positive for avian influenza, however, none of the types of avian influenza found in these samples were the Asian H5N1 subtype and none of them presented a risk to human or animal health. To date (September 1, 2007) the Asian H5N1 subtype has not been detected in North America. The IDNR plans to continue sampling for avian influenza testing this Fall as part of the nationwide surveillance effort. While the role of wild birds in transporting Asian H5N1 is not clear, the nationwide surveillance effort will help to ensure the early detection of Asian H5N1 should it occur in North America. Several species will be selected for sampling and Department biologists may be sampling in your hunting area. The sample collection only lasts a minute and your birds will be returned to you intact. So please help the Department in its efforts to watch for the disease by allowing your birds to be sampled.

Some hunters have also inquired as to whether their hunting dogs could be at risk for contracting Asian H5N1 avian influenza. To date, there have been no clinical cases of dogs contracting the disease. In an experiment, dogs were injected with Asian H5N1 but did not become sick. While it appears that dogs are not at great risk of contracting the disease, the possibility can not be ruled out entirely. More research is still being conducted on this topic.

Apparently healthy birds can carry diseases other than avian influenza which can infect humans. As a result, hunters and others handling wild birds and game should follow the minimum basic precautions below:

The following advisory guidelines have been developed by the National Wildlife Health Center: (see www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/avian_influenza/index.jsp for more details)

- Do not handle or eat sick game.
- Wear rubber or disposable latex gloves while handling and cleaning game, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, and thoroughly clean knives, equipment and surfaces that come in contact with game. After cleaning, surfaces and equipment can be disinfected with a 10% household bleach solution.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke while handling animals.
- All game should be thoroughly cooked (well done or 160° F). Additional information on food safety can be found at:

www.who.int/entity/foodsafety/fs_management/No_02_Avianinfluenza_Dec04_en.pdf

Links for further information about Avian Influenza:

Illinois Department of Public Health -
www.idph.state.il.us/avianflu.htm

Illinois Department of Agriculture -
www.agr.state.il.us/news/Special/birdflu/

National Wildlife Health Center -
www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/avian_influenza/index.jsp

Centers for Disease Control -
www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/index.htm

World Health Organization -
www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

2007-2008 WATERFOWL HUNTING INFORMATION

New Regulations are Shaded.

LICENSES, STAMPS AND HIP

Hunters must have a current, valid hunting license, Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration/certification and Federal and State Migratory Waterfowl Stamps in their possession at all times when afield. Federal stamps must be signed in ink across the face of the stamp. Please refer to the **2007-2008 Digest of Hunting & Trapping Regulations** for exemptions and further information.

Annual Fees Are (*including agent's fees*):

Resident Hunting License	\$7.50
Non-resident Hunting License 5-day/regular	\$28.75 / \$50.75
Resident Senior Hunting License	\$4.00
State Waterfowl Stamp	\$10.50
Federal Waterfowl Stamp	\$15.00 *
Sportsman's License (hunt-fish)	\$19.25

* Does not include agent's fee which may be 50¢ or 75¢.

A State Habitat Stamp is **NOT** required to hunt waterfowl.

IF YOU WANT TO HUNT WATERFOWL IN ILLINOIS AND YOU ARE:

YOU NEED:	under 16	16 – 64	65 & Older	Disabled ¹	Service- man ¹	Land- owner ¹
Hunting License	X	X	X			
Federal Waterfowl Stamp		X	X	X	X	X
State Waterfowl Stamp		X	X			
Harvest Information Program (HIP) Registration/Certification ^a	X	X	X			

^a To hunt migratory game birds (doves, ducks, geese, coots, mergansers, woodcock, snipe and rails). Lifetime license holders are exempt.

¹ For the purpose of this section, "DISABLED" = disabled American veterans with at least 10% service-related disabilities or disabled persons certified under the Illinois Identification Card Act as having a Type 1 or Type 4, Class 2 disability. "SERVICEMAN" = persons on leave from the Armed Services, having entered the military as an Illinois resident. "LANDOWNER" (or tenant) = those persons and their children, parents, brothers and sisters **permanently residing** on their land and **hunting on that land**.

HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM (HIP)

Also Dove and Other Migratory Gamebird Hunters

Registration with **HIP** (National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program) is required **annually** to hunt migratory game birds in Illinois. Register with HIP at the license vendor when you purchase your hunting license and state duck stamp. Hunters can also register with HIP online at **www.dnr.state.il.us** or by calling **1-888-6PERMIT** (1-888-673-7648). A \$3.08 convenience fee will be charged for phone sales if you do not register for HIP at the time of license purchase.

You **cannot** register with HIP at the old 800 phone number.

DUCKS & EARLY CANADA GEESE

SPECIES	DATES (Inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Teal	Sept. 8-Sept. 23 (Statewide)	Sunrise to Sunset	4	8
Ducks	North Zone Oct. 20 – Dec. 18	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	6 (See section on Bag Limits)	2 x daily bag limit
Mergansers	Central Zone Oct. 27 – Dec. 25		5 (See section on Bag Limits)	2 x daily bag limit
Coots	South Zone Nov. 22 – Jan. 20		15	30
Early Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 15 (Northeast Zone only)		5 (a)	10
Early Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 15 (North, Central & South Zones)		2 (a)	4

(a) Daily bag limit is five in Northeast Canada Goose Zone and two in the South Zone and that portion of the North & Central Zones outside the Northeast Canada Goose Zone.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS*

FOOT WATER FOWL HUNTING DATES			
SPECIES	DATES	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT
Ducks	North Zone Oct. 13 – 14	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	6 (See section on Bag Limits)
Mergansers			5 (See section on Bag Limits)
Coots	Central Zone Oct. 20 – 21		15
Canada Geese			2
Snow Geese	South Zone Nov. 10 – 11		20
White-fronted Geese			2
Brant			1

*Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day Regulations

1. Youth hunters must be 15 years of age or younger and must have a hunting license and HIP registration/certification unless hunting on property where they reside. No stamps are required for youths under 16.
2. Only geese, ducks, mergansers and coots may be taken in addition to other game in season.
3. An adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult cannot hunt geese, ducks, coots or mergansers but can participate in other open seasons.

Bag Limit – DUCKS – Bag limits on ducks are as follows: The basic daily bag limit shall be 6 ducks of any species including all teal species, (except mergansers); however, no more than 4 shall be mallards (no more than 2 hen mallards) and not more than 2 scaup, 2 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, and not more than 1 black duck and 1 pintail. The daily bag limit for all mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be a hooded merganser. The possession limit for ducks and mergansers is twice the daily bag limit.

GEESE

		DATES (Inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
Canada Geese					
North Zone		Oct. 20 – Jan. 12	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	2	4
Central Zone		Oct. 27 – Nov. 8 & Nov. 21 – Jan. 31			
South Zone		Nov. 22 – Nov. 25 & Dec. 1 – Jan. 31	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset		
Alexander, Jackson Union and Williamson Counties			1/2 hour before sunrise to 3 p.m (a)		
Snow/Blue & Ross' Geese and Brant					
North Zone		Oct. 20 – Jan. 12	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	20 Snow/Blue & Ross' Geese 1 Brant	Unlimited Snow/Blue & Ross' Geese 2 Brant
Central Zone		Oct. 27 – Jan. 31			
South Zone		Nov. 22 – Jan. 31			
Alexander, Jackson Union and Williamson Counties		Nov. 22 – Jan. 31	1/2 hour before sunrise to 3 p.m (a)		
White-fronted Geese					
North Zone		Nov. 2 – Jan. 12	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	2	4
Central Zone		Nov. 21 – Jan. 31			
South Zone		Nov. 22 – Jan. 31		2	4
Alexander, Jackson Union and Williamson Counties		Nov. 22 – Jan. 31	1/2 hour before sunrise to 3 p.m (a)	2	4

(a) During Jan. 29, 30 and 31 hunting hours end at sunset.

CONSERVATION ORDER LIGHT GOOSE SEASONS

DATES (Inclusive)		HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
(Snow/blue and Ross' Goose)		1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset	None	None
North Zone	Jan. 13 – March 31			
Central Zone	Feb. 1 – March 31			
South Zone	Feb. 1 – March 31			

CONSERVATION ORDER SEASON REGULATIONS

1. Unplugged shotguns may be used. There is no limit to the number of shells that may be placed in a shotgun.
2. Electronic calling devices may be used.
3. No federal duck stamp required.
4. State duck stamp and hunting license required.

DON'T SHOOT A SWAN

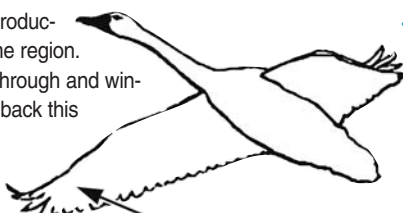
DON'T MAKE A MISTAKE! ALL WILD SWANS ARE PROTECTED IN ILLINOIS

Several Midwestern states are reintroducing the native Trumpeter Swan to the region. Some of these birds are migrating through and wintering in Illinois. You can help bring back this magnificent swan by:

- Learning the difference between swans and snow geese.
- Reporting observations of marked swans with wing tags, neck collars, bands.
- Protecting wetland habitat.
- Reporting any harassment of Trumpeter Swans.

Please report swan sightings to:

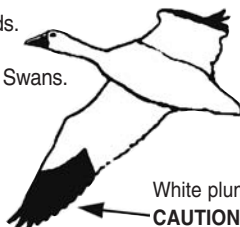
**Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Waterfowl Program,
700 South 10th Street,
Havana, IL 62644
309/543-3065**



TRUMPETER SWAN

Protected Species.
Long neck
Length: 4 ft.
Wingspan: 7 ft.
Weight: 20 - 30 lbs.

ALL WHITE PLUMAGE



SNOW GOOSE

Legally hunted.
Short neck
Length: 1 1/2 ft.
Wingspan: 3 1/2 ft.
Weight: 3 - 6 lbs.

White plumage, but BLACK WING TIPS.

CAUTION-White Pelicans have black wing tips, but their wingspan is 8-9 1/2 ft.

FIREARMS SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU

1. Be sure of your target and what's beyond it before you pull the trigger.
2. Do not shoot towards homes, buildings, people or animals that may be hit by your shot, especially when using large shot sizes.
3. Use caution when shooting over water or ice to avoid ricochet.
4. Set up a safe shooting corridor in front of your blind and do not shoot outside it.
5. You are responsible for what your shot strikes. Hunters who damage property or injure others can be charged with reckless conduct and face criminal and financial penalties.

WATERFOWL BANDS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers a toll-free number for reporting waterfowl bands. If you take a banded bird, please report the band number online at www.reportband.gov or call **1-800-327-BAND** (2263), with information about when and where you shot the bird. From September 1 through February 28, you can call this number 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From March 1 through August 31, services are available from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. CDT. You will receive a Certificate of Appreciation with information about when and where the bird was banded. Your cooperation on reporting band numbers gives waterfowl biologists a wealth of useful information that allows them to manage the resource in a way that provides hunters with maximum recreational opportunities while protecting waterfowl populations. You may report any band to this number, even if it is an old band that does not have the 1-800 number inscribed on it.

WETLAND MANAGEMENT FOR WATERFOWL

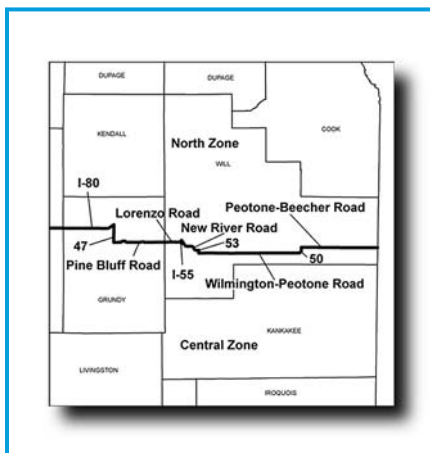
At some public waterfowl hunting areas some hunters are concerned about a lack of crops planted for ducks and duck hunting. As the state agency responsible for managing wildlife in Illinois, it is our duty to use best management practices that benefit waterfowl and other wildlife. Current research in waterfowl management emphasizes the value of moist-soil management for ducks and other wildlife. There appears to be an abundance of waste grains available to migrating waterfowl in Illinois, especially mallards and Canada geese, due to the advent of modern farming practices such as no-till and reduced tillage farming. However, many waterfowl do not eat corn, and wetland habitats along with moist-soil forage have been drastically reduced in Illinois when compared to historical times due to wetland drainage, siltation, dams, and other human alterations to the landscape. A combination of cereal grains and moist-soil plants at public hunting areas and refuges will provide quality duck hunting opportunity as could be expected with all cereal grains, while also providing waterfowl and other wildlife with ideal habitat and forage. Some examples of beneficial moist-soil plants for waterfowl includes wild millet (barnyard grass), rice cutgrass, smartweed, sprangletop, sedges, panic grass, teal grass, arrowhead and beggarticks.

Advantages of Moist Soil Management

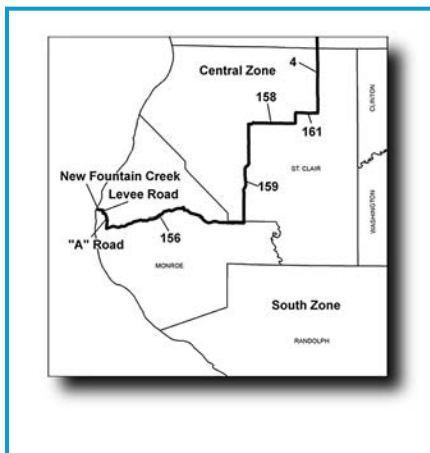
- Lower cost per unit than row crop management.
- Productive in a variety of moisture and weather conditions when domestic grains fail.
- Moist soil plants and seeds contain many essential nutrients lacking in domestic grains. Used in conjunction with nearby grain production on other areas, the best of both is provided to waterfowl and other wildlife.
- Provide valuable insect and other macroinvertebrate communities important for diverse populations of waterfowl and other wildlife. Studies in Missouri have documented enhanced wildlife diversity in moist-soil units when compared with adjacent row cropped areas.
- Provide spring migration habitat for waterfowl as well as shorebirds and a variety of other waterbirds such as egrets, herons, and rails. Spring migration habitat is important to waterfowl so that they return to the breeding grounds in the best body condition possible.

WATERFOWL HUNTING ZONES

North Zone – That portion of the state north of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Peotone-Beecher Road to Illinois Route 50, south along Illinois Route 50 to Wilmington-Peotone Road, west along Wilmington-Peotone Road to Illinois Route 53, north along Illinois Route 53 to New River Road, northwest along New River Road to Interstate Highway 55, south along I-55 to Pine Bluff-Lorenzo Road, west along Pine Bluff - Lorenzo Road to Illinois Route 47, north along Illinois Route 47 to I-80, west along I-80 to I-39, south along I-39 to Illinois Route 18, west along Illinois Route 18 to Illinois Route 29, south along Illinois Route 29 to Illinois Route 17, west along Illinois Route 17 to the Mississippi River, and due south across the Mississippi River to the Iowa border.



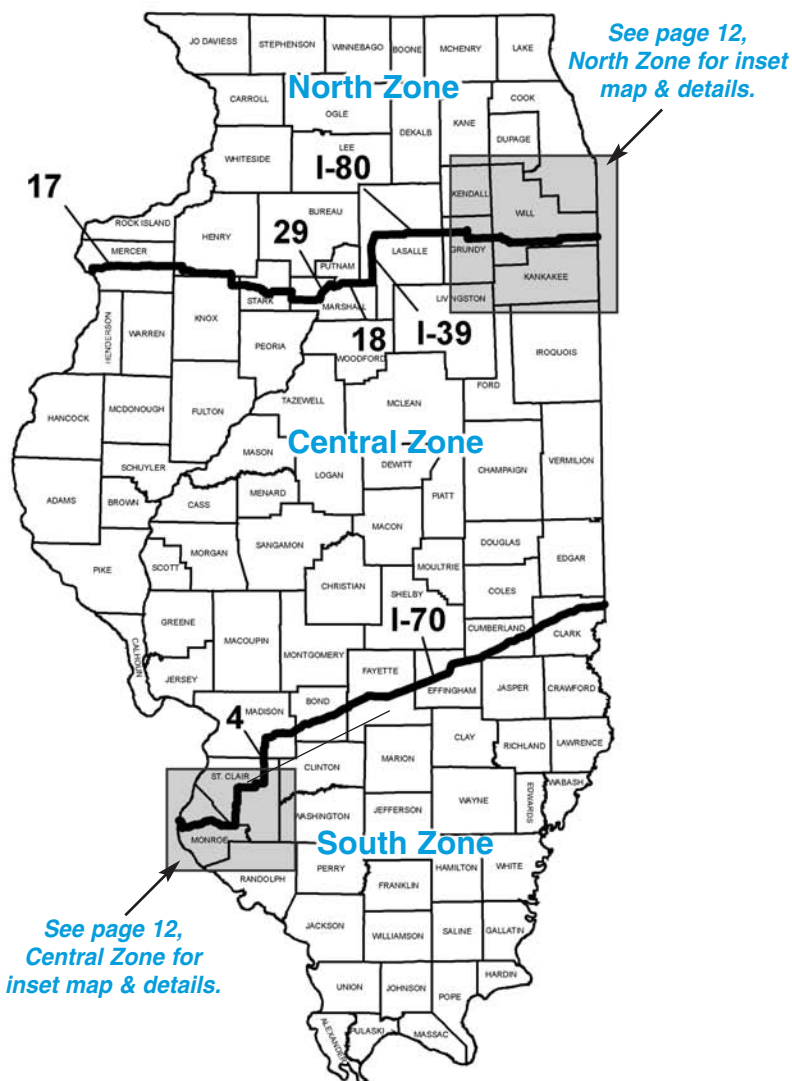
Central Zone – That portion of the state south of the North Zone to a line extending west from the Indiana border along Interstate Highway 70 to Illinois Route 4, south along Illinois Route 4 to Illinois Route 161, west along Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 158, south and west along Illinois Route 158 to Illinois Route 159, south along Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 156, west along Illinois Route 156 to A Road, north and west on A Road to Levee Road, north on Levee Road to the south shore of New Fountain Creek, west along the south shore of New Fountain Creek to the Mississippi River, and due west across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.



South Zone – The remainder of Illinois.

Northeast Canada Goose Zone – Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties This zone only applies during September goose season.

ILLINOIS WATERFOWL ZONES



SUNRISE AND SUNSET TIMES BY REGION IN ILLINOIS



To use these tables, refer to map for region which you will be hunting, and match that region's number with appropriate month and date.

All times are for Central Standard.
Add one hour for Daylight Savings Time.

OCTOBER

REGION

SUNRISE
SUNSET

All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.

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6:00 5:41	5:55 5:36	5:51 5:32	6:00 5:42	5:55 5:37	5:50 5:32	5:56 5:39	5:51 5:35
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AM
PM

NOVEMBER

REGION

SUNRISE
SUNSET

CST

All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.

Add one
hour for
Daylight
Savings
Time
Nov. 1-3

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AM
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DECEMBER

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SUNRISE
SUNSET

All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.

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JANUARY

REGION

SUNRISE
SUNSET

All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.

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17	7:24 4:59	7:20 4:54	7:16 4:51	7:21 5:05	7:16 4:59	7:10 4:55	7:13 5:05	7:08 5:01	
18	7:24 5:00	7:19 4:55	7:15 4:52	7:20 5:06	7:15 5:00	7:09 4:56	7:12 5:06	7:07 5:02	
19	7:23 5:01	7:19 4:56	7:15 4:53	7:20 5:07	7:15 5:01	7:09 4:57	7:12 5:08	7:07 5:03	
20	7:23 5:03	7:18 4:58	7:14 4:54	7:19 5:08	7:14 5:02	7:08 4:58	7:11 5:09	7:06 5:04	
21	7:22 5:04	7:17 4:59	7:13 4:56	7:18 5:09	7:13 5:04	7:08 5:00	7:11 5:10	7:06 5:05	
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FEBRUARY

REGION

**SUNRISE
SUNSET**

**All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	7:13 5:18	7:08 5:13	7:04 5:09	7:10 5:22	7:05 5:17	6:59 5:12	7:03 5:22	6:58 5:17	AM PM
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MARCH

REGION

SUNRISE
SUNSET

DST


All times
are for
Central
Standard
Time.

Add one
hour for
Daylight
Savings
Time.
Mar. 9 -
31, 2008.

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31	5:46 6:26	5:41 6:21	5:37 6:17	5:48 6:25	5:42 6:20	5:38 6:15	5:45 6:21	5:40 6:16

AM
PM

CONSEP⁴ 2006 NONTOXIC SHOT LETHALITY TABLE[©]

Proven Nontoxic Shot Loads For Waterfowl ¹ & Upland Game Birds ¹ Load Velocity: 1,225 - 1,450 FPS							
ACTIVITY	Typical Shooting Range of Activity (Yards)	Most Effective Nontoxic Shot Sizes(s) for Activity	Minimum Load Weight (Ounces)	Minimum Pellet Hits Needed on Lethal Areas for Clean Kills	Minimum Pattern Count Needed at Any Distance for Clean Kills (# of Pellets in 30" Circle)	Choke Starting Points (Given in Lead Shot Choke Designations)	
Large Geese At Long Range ² Giant, Western, Atlantic and Interior Canadas	50-65	Steel BBB to T	1-1/4	1-2	50-55	Improved Modified	
	50-70	HEVI-Shot 2 to BB	1-1/4	1-2	50-55	Full, Improved Modified	
Large Geese Over Decoys ²	40-50	Steel BB to BBB	1-1/8	1-2	50-55	Modified (Mod. or M.)	
	40-50	HEVI-Shot 4 to 2	1-1/4	1-2	50-55	I.C., Modified	
Medium/Small Geese Long Range ² Snow, White-front, Lesser Canadas	50-65	Steel BB to BBB	1-1/4	1-2	60-65	Improved Modified	
Medium/Small Geese Over Decoys ²	40-50	Steel 2 to BB	1-1/8	1-2	60-65	Modified (Mod. or M.)	
Large Ducks At Long Range Mallard, Black, Pintail, Goldeneye, Gadwall	45-65	Steel 2 to 1	1-1/8	1-2	85-90	Full	
Large Ducks Over Decoys ³	20-45	Steel 6 to 2	3/4 - 1	1-2	85-90	I.C. (20-35 Yds), M. (35-45 Yds)	
Medium Ducks Over Decoys ³	30-45	Steel 6 to 3	1	1-2	115-120	I.C. (20-35 Yards), Modified (35-45 Yards)	
Small Ducks Over Decoys ³ Wigeon, Scaup, Stoveler Teal, Ruddy, Buffhead	30-45	Steel 6 to 4	1	1-2	135-145	Modified (20-35 Yards), Full (35-45 Yards)	
Ring-necked Pheasants	20-50	Steel 3 to 2	1	2-3	90-95	I.C. (20-30 Yds), M. (30-50 Yds)	
Turkeys (Head and Neck Shots)	20-40	Steel 4	1-1/4	3-4	210-230	Full or Extra Full	
Swatter Load For Wounded Birds	20-35	Steel 7 to 5	1	1	175	Mod. or Full (7 or 6), Full (5's)	
This table summarizes analysis to date of the waterfowl and upland game bird lethality data base of the Cooperative North American Shotgunning Education Program (CONSEP). Responsible shotgun hunters not only engage in thorough pattern testing and ample target practice, but also restrict shooting to ranges less than 45 yards.							
Note: To date, steel #BBB (190") and HEVI-Shot #2 (150") have exhibited the best all-around performance for taking geese, steel #3 (140") the best all-around performance for taking ducks.							
1 These findings are derived from testing 3" 20-gauge, 24", 3" and 3 1/2" 12-gauge, and 3 1/2" 10 gauge steel loads and 2 1/2" and 3" 12 gauge HEVI-Shot loads. As additional pellet sizes and types, load configurations, and gauges are tested and data bases completed, findings will be updated and may change.							
2 Steel #F (220") in all 12-gauge load configurations has exhibited the highest crippling rate on geese of all steel pellet sizes tested. Due to inadequate pattern density, steel #F has not proven lethal on geese beyond 55 yards.							
3 Steel #4 (130") has exhibited good all-around performance for taking small and medium-sized ducks, but has not proven lethal on large ducks beyond 45 yards.							
This terminal ballistics information is provided courtesy of the members of CONSEP. CONSEP is a research and information service currently funded jointly by 18 U.S. state fish and wildlife agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Inter. Hunter Educ. Assoc., the British Assoc. for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), the Danish Hunters' Assoc.-Denmark, Field & Game Australia, Sporting Shooters Assoc. of Australia, the Victoria Dept. of Sustainability and Environ.-Australia, Environ-Metal. Inc., Remington Arms Co., and Winchester Div./Olin Corp. Contributing members include Larry Gore's Katy Prairie Outfitters, Briley Mfg. Co., and Oregon DF&W.							
4 This table is NOT a CONSEP product. Table created and © Copyright 2006 by Tom Roster. Reprint rights and/or permission to quote/use portions of this table granted only by written permission of Tom Roster, 1190 Lynnswood Blvd., Klamath Falls, OR, USA 97601, 541/884-2374, tomlster@charter.net							

NOTE:
Shot size BB Hevi-Shot is illegal to use when hunting waterfowl in Illinois due to safety concerns caused by shot carry distance.

This table summarizes analysis to date of the waterfowl and upland game bird lethality data base of the Cooperative North American Shotgunning Education Program (CONSEP). Responsible shotgun hunters not only engage in thorough pattern testing and ample target practice, but also restrict shooting to ranges less than 45 yards.

Note: To date, steel #BBB (190") and HEVI-Shot #2 (150") have exhibited the best all-around performance for taking geese; steel #3 (140") the best all-around performance for taking ducks.

1 These findings are derived from testing 3" 20-gauge; 2 2 1/2", 3" and 3 1/2" 12-gauge; and 3 1/2" 10-gauge steel loads and 2 1/2" and 3" 12 gauge HEVI-Shot loads. As additional pellet sizes and types, load configurations, and gauges are tested and data bases completed, findings will be updated and may change.

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SUMMARY OF STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

In addition to statewide regulations, the following regulations apply to MIGRATORY WATERFOWL HUNTERS (ducks, geese, mergansers, coots).

NOTE: Material below is only a summary. Each hunter should also consult Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, Chapter 520 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes and IL Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations - 2007-2008, or talk with a local Conservation Police Officer or a Division of Wildlife Resources Biologist. For additional information on federal regulations call the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Springfield, Illinois at 217-793-9554.

Non-Toxic Shot Requirements

It is unlawful to have in possession while attempting to take migratory waterfowl (including coots and captive reared mallards), snipe or rail in Illinois any shotgun shells prohibited by state or federal regulations. The only shot approved as non-toxic by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 CFR 20) and maximum shot sizes allowed by Illinois regulations are as listed in the chart on the **back cover** of this guide.

Hunting Devices & Ammunition Restrictions

It is unlawful to use a trap, snare, net, crossbow, rifle, pistol, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.

It is unlawful to hunt with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, **UNLESS** it is plugged with a one-piece filler which limits its total shell capacity to three and which is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun. This does not apply during Conservation Order light goose seasons (snow/blue and Ross' geese) that occur after Canada goose season has closed. (see page 10).

Hunting From Floating Blinds, Boats & Scull Boats

It is unlawful to hunt from a floating blind that is not anchored **EXCEPT** a scull boat may be used on certain public waters and waterfowl may be taken from a boat not mechanically powered and not camouflaged or disguised. A boat merely painted camouflage is not considered camouflaged.

Live Decoys

It is unlawful to hunt by the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.

Electronic Calling Devices

It is unlawful to use a recording or electronic calling device to hunt migratory birds other than crows, except during Conservation Order light goose seasons that occur after Canada goose season such electronic call devices may be used to hunt snow/blue and Ross' geese. (see page 10).

Shooting Crippled Waterfowl From Boats

It is unlawful to hunt waterfowl from a moving watercraft propelled by mechanical power or sails. NOTE: However, waterfowl hunters may have an uncased and unloaded gun in their boat for the purpose of pursuing crippled migratory waterfowl incapable of normal flight in an

attempt to reduce said bird to possession, provided that the attempt is made immediately upon downing the bird and is done within 400 yards of the blind from which the bird was downed. The gun cannot be loaded unless the motor has been completely shut off and the crippled birds may not be shot from such a boat until the motor has been completely shut off and its progress therefrom has ceased.

Driving or Chasing Birds

It is unlawful to hunt by driving, rallying or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range of the hunters.

Permits Required for Leased Lands and Commercial Clubs

It is unlawful to commercially control land or water, or both, in whole or in part for the taking of migratory waterfowl, unless first obtaining a permit from the Department. NOTE: A person is "commercially controlling land or water, or both" when he directly or indirectly receives compensation from persons in exchange for the opportunity to enter onto that land or water.

Possession of Live Birds

It is unlawful to retain live waterfowl taken while hunting. Every migratory game bird wounded by hunting and reduced to possession by the hunter shall be immediately killed and become part of the daily bag limit.

Field Possession Limit

It is unlawful to possess, have in custody, or transport more than one daily bag limit tagged or not tagged while in the field or while returning from the field to one's car, hunting camp, home, etc.

Wanton Waste – Retrieval of Downed Game Birds

It is unlawful to kill or cripple any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and retain it in your actual custody, at the place where taken or between that place and your automobile or personal abode or temporary place of lodging or a migratory bird preservation facility or a post office or a common carrier facility. ***Birds must remain in your possession while in the field.*** NOTE: You need permission to enter private property.

Tagging Requirements

It is unlawful to give, put or leave any migratory game birds at any place (other than his personal abode) or in the custody of another person UNLESS the birds are tagged by the hunter with the hunter's signature and address, the total number of birds involved, by species, and the dates such birds were killed.

Gift of Migratory Game Birds

No person may receive, possess, or give to another, any freshly-killed migratory game bird as a gift, except at the personal abode of the donor or donee, unless such birds have a tag attached (see tagging requirements).

Custody of Birds of Another

It is unlawful to receive or have in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person UNLESS such birds are properly tagged.

Species Identification Requirement

It is unlawful to completely field dress any migratory game bird (except doves) and then transport the birds from the field. The head or one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all such birds while being transported from the field to one's home or commercial preservation facility.

Termination of Possession

The possession of birds taken by any hunter ceases when such birds have been delivered by him to another person as a gift; or have been delivered by him to a post office, a common carrier, or a migratory bird preservation facility and consigned for transport by the Postal Service or a common carrier to some person other than the hunter.

Shipment – Marking Package

It is unlawful to ship migratory game birds UNLESS the package is marked clearly and conspicuously on the outside with the name and address of the person sending the birds, the name and address of the person to whom the birds are being sent, and the number of birds, by species, contained in the package.

Importation

It is unlawful to import migratory game birds killed in any foreign country, except Canada, UNLESS such birds are dressed (except as required below), drawn and the head and feet are removed. NOTE: One fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory game birds being transported between a port of entry and one's home or to a migratory bird preservation facility. No person shall import migratory game birds belonging to another person. For information regarding the importation of migratory birds killed in another country, hunters should consult 50 CFR 20.61 through 20.66.

Sink Box

It is unlawful to hunt from a sink box (a low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).

ADDITIONAL CANADA GOOSE HUNTING REGULATIONS ON NON-COMMERCIAL AREAS IN ALEXANDER, FRANKLIN, JACKSON, JEFFERSON, UNION AND WILLIAMSON COUNTIES

On any property where the principal use is to take wild geese in Alexander, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Union and Williamson counties, other than property operated under a Commercial Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Area Permit, all of the following restrictions shall be observed but only during Canada goose season:

- (1) No person may take wild geese except from a blind or pit and it shall be illegal to take or attempt to take geese from the base of standing timber except when immediately adjacent to an open field.
- (2) No person may establish or use a blind or pit within 100 yards of the boundary of the property on which the blind or pit is located unless the minimum yardage requirement cannot be met, in which case one blind or pit may be permitted only if there is a minimum of 200 yards between that pit or blind and the nearest pit or blind.
- (3) No person may establish or use a blind or pit for the taking of wild geese within 200 yards of any wildlife refuge boundary or public road right-of-way adjacent to any State or Federal waterfowl refuge. If a blind or pit has been established for more than 10 years and it was believed by both the landowner and the Department during that time to meet the minimum yardage requirements of this paragraph (3), then the blind or pit may remain in place even though a survey or other evidence may indicate that the minimum yardage requirements are not met.
- (4) No more than 5 persons may occupy or attempt to take wild geese from any blind or pit at the same time. **note:** This does not apply in Franklin and Jefferson Counties.

STATE AND FEDERAL BAITING REGULATIONS

Federal baiting regulations define key terms for hunters and land managers, and clarify conditions under which you may legally hunt waterfowl and other migratory game birds. As a waterfowl hunter or land manager, it is your responsibility to know and obey all Federal and State laws that govern the sport. Rules that affect waterfowl hunting also apply to hunting coots and all references to waterfowl encompass these birds as well. Federal regulations are more restrictive for waterfowl hunting than for dove hunting.

For further information, go to www.fws.gov/le/huntfish/waterfowl_baiting.htm.

Definitions from Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20.11

Normal agricultural planting, harvesting, or post-harvest manipulation means a planting or harvesting undertaken for the purpose of producing and gathering a crop, or manipulation after such harvest and removal of grain, that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Normal agricultural operation means a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation, or agricultural practice, that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Normal soil stabilization practice means a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for agricultural soil erosion control.

Baited area means any area on which salt, grain, or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, if that salt, grain, or other feed could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over areas where hunters are attempting to take them. Any such area will remain a baited area for 10 days following the complete removal of all such salt, grain, or other feed.

Baiting means the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them.

Manipulation means the alteration of natural vegetation or agricultural crops by activities that include but are not limited to mowing, shredding, discing, rolling, chopping, trampling, flattening, burning, or herbicide treatments. The term manipulation does not include the distributing or scattering of grain, seed, or other feed after removal from or storage on the field where grown.

Natural vegetation means any non-agricultural, native, or naturalized plant species that grows at a site in response to planting or from existing seeds or other propagules. The term natural vegetation does not include planted millet. However, planted millet that grows on its own in subsequent years after the year of planting is considered natural vegetation.

Excerpts from Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20.21(i)

No persons shall take migratory game birds:

- (i) By the aid of baiting, or on or over any baited area, where a person knows or reasonably should know that the area is or has been baited. However, nothing in this paragraph prohibits:
 - (1) The taking of any migratory game bird, including waterfowl and coots, on or over the following lands or areas that are not otherwise baited areas —
 - (i) Standing crops or flooded standing crops (including aquatics); standing, flooded, or manipulated natural vegetation; flooded harvested croplands; or lands or areas where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation or normal soil stabilization practice;
 - (ii) From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation;
 - (iii) From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with vegetation from agricultural crops, as long as such camouflaging does not result in the exposing, depositing, distributing or scattering of grain or other feed; or
 - (iv) Standing or flooded standing agricultural crops where grain is inadvertently scattered solely as a result of a hunter entering or exiting a hunting area, placing decoys, or retrieving downed birds.

What Part 20.21(i) of the Code of Federal Regulations Means

You cannot hunt waterfowl or any other migratory game bird by the aid of baiting or on or over any baited area where you know or reasonably should know that the area is or has been baited. Baiting is the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of salt, grain, or other feed that could lure or attract migratory game birds to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them. A baited area is any area on which salt, grain, or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, if that salt, grain, or feed could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds.

The 10-Day Rule

A baited area remains off limits to hunting for 10 days after all salt, grain, or other feed has been completely removed. Waterfowl will habitually still be attracted to the same area even after the bait is gone. The 10-day rule recognizes that removing bait does not remove the lure created and that waterfowl will still be attracted to the area.

What is Legal?

You can hunt migratory game birds, including waterfowl, on, over, or from:

- Standing crops or flooded standing crops, including aquatic plants.
- Standing, flooded, or manipulated natural vegetation.
- Flooded harvested croplands.
- Lands or areas where grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural harvesting or normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation.
- Lands or areas where top-sown seeds have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, or a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation.

- From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation.
- From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with vegetation from agricultural crops, provided your use of such vegetation does not expose, deposit, distribute or scatter grain or other feed. You should be aware that seeds or grains from such vegetation could create a baited area.
- On or over standing, or flooded standing agricultural crops where grain is inadvertently scattered solely as the result of hunters entering or leaving the area, placing decoys, or retrieving downed birds. Hunters are cautioned that while conducting these activities, any intentional scattering of grains will create a baited area.

Waterfowl Hunting on Agricultural Lands

Agricultural lands offer prime waterfowl hunting opportunities. You can hunt waterfowl in fields of unharvested standing crops. You can also hunt over standing crops that have been flooded. You can flood fields after crops are harvested and use these areas for waterfowl hunting.

The presence of seed or grain in an agricultural area rules out waterfowl hunting unless the seed or grain is scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, normal agricultural harvesting, normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation, or normal agricultural soil stabilization practice. A normal agricultural planting, normal agricultural harvesting, or normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation means a planting or harvesting undertaken to produce **and** gather a crop, or manipulation after such harvest and removal of grain. These activities must be conducted in accordance with official recommendations of the State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Planting and Harvesting

A normal agricultural planting is undertaken for the purpose of producing **and** gathering a crop. Normal agricultural plantings do not involve the placement of seeds in piles or other concentrations. Relevant factors include recommended planting dates, proper seed distribution, seed bed preparation, application rate, and seed viability. A normal soil stabilization practice means a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation conducted in accordance with official recommendations of USDA State Extension Specialists. Lands planted by means of top sowing or aerial seeding can **only** be hunted if seeds are present solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting or normal soil stabilization practice. Lands planted as part of normal soil stabilization practices may be hunted over even if there is no intent to gather a crop.

Seeds that remain on the surface of the ground as the result of planting wildlife food plots, planting a "goose field," or planting for erosion control on a construction site are examples of activities that constitute baiting since they are not plantings undertaken for the purpose of producing and gathering a crop, agricultural soil erosion control, or post-mining land reclamation. You cannot hunt waterfowl over such areas.

A normal agricultural harvest is undertaken for the purpose of gathering a crop. The arrangement of harvested grain in long rows or piles should raise questions about the legality of the area for waterfowl hunting. A normal post-harvest manipulation first requires a normal agricultural harvest and removal of grain before any manipulation of remaining agricultural

vegetation, such as corn stubble or rice stubble. You should be aware that although you can hunt doves over manipulated agricultural crops, you cannot hunt waterfowl over manipulated agricultural crops except after the field has been subject to a normal harvest and removal of grain (i.e., post-harvest manipulation).

If, for whatever reason, an agricultural crop or a portion of an agricultural crop has not been harvested (i.e., equipment failure, weather, insect infestation, disease, etc.) and the crop or remaining portion of the crop has been manipulated, then the area is a baited area and cannot be hunted for waterfowl. For example, no hunting could occur on or over a field of sweet corn that has been partially harvested and the remainder manipulated. To be considered normal, an agricultural planting, agricultural harvesting, and agricultural post-harvest manipulation must be conducted in accordance with official recommendations of USDA State Extension Specialists. However, the Service will continue to make final determinations about whether official recommendations were followed.

Hunting Over Natural Vegetation

Natural vegetation is any non-agricultural, native, or naturalized plant species that grows at a site in response to planting or from existing seeds or other propagules. Natural vegetation does not include planted millet because of its use as both an agricultural crop and a species of natural vegetation for moist soil management. However, planted millet that grows on its own in subsequent years is considered natural vegetation.

If you restore and manage wetlands as habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds, you can manipulate the natural vegetation in these areas and make them available for hunting. Activities that fall within the definition of “manipulation” include mowing, shredding, discing, rolling, chopping, trampling, flattening, burning, and herbicide treatments.

Natural vegetation is not intended to include plants grown as agricultural crops.

Problem Areas

Feeding waterfowl. Many people feed waterfowl for the pleasure of birdwatching. It is illegal to hunt migratory game birds in an area where such feeding has occurred that could lure or attract birds to, on, or over any area where hunters are attempting to take them. The 10-day rule applies to such areas, and any salt, grain, or feed must be gone 10 days before hunting. The use of sand, shell grit, and artificial corn is not prohibited.

Distance. How close to bait can you hunt without breaking the law? There is no set distance. Court rulings vary depending on the circumstances. The influence of bait will increase or decrease depending on such factors as topography, weather, and waterfowl flight patterns. The question of distance can only be answered on a case-by-case basis. Remember, however, that the law prohibits hunting if bait is present that could lure or attract birds “to, on, or over areas where hunters are attempting to take them.”

Manipulation of crops and other agricultural practices. Although you can hunt waterfowl over natural vegetation that has been manipulated, you cannot hunt waterfowl over any manipulations of agricultural crops that occur before harvest and removal of grain. You cannot hunt waterfowl on or over areas where farmers feed grain to livestock, store grain, or engage in other normal agricultural practices. You cannot hunt waterfowl on or over ponds or other waters where fish farmers feed food to their fish, or on or over areas where wildlife is being fed.

The Hunter's Responsibility

As a hunter, you are responsible for determining whether your proposed hunting area is baited. Before hunting, you should:

- Familiarize yourself with Federal and State migratory game bird hunting regulations.
- Ask the landowner, your host or guide, and your hunting partners if the area has been baited.
- Suspect the presence of bait if you see waterfowl feeding in a particular area in unusual concentrations or displaying a lack of caution.
- Look for grain or other feed in the water, along the shore, and on the field. Pay particular attention to the presence of spilled grain on harvested fields and seeds planted by means of top-sowing.
- Confirm that scattered seeds or grains on agricultural lands are present solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, normal agricultural harvesting, normal agricultural post-harvest manipulation, or normal soil stabilization practice by consulting with USDA State Extension Specialists.
- Abandon the hunting site if you find grain or feed in an area and are uncertain about why it is there.

Other Responsibilities

If you prepare lands for hunting, participate in such preparations, or direct such preparations, it is important for you to know and understand what practices constitute baiting. You should know **prior to hunting** what activities constitute baiting and when lands or other areas would be considered baited. If you bait or direct that an area be baited and allow hunting to proceed, you risk being charged with an offense that carries significant penalties.

Strict Liability

For years, courts in most parts of this country had historically applied a strict liability standard to baiting offenses. Under this standard, law enforcement officers did not have to prove that hunters knew bait was present in order to prove a violation had occurred. However, on October 30, 1998, Public Law 105-312 eliminated strict liability for baiting offenses and instead made it unlawful for anyone to hunt with the aid of bait "if the person knows or reasonably should know that the area is a baited area." The Service has incorporated this "knows or reasonably should know" standard in the baiting regulation to promote public understanding of the new law. As in the past, however, hunters are responsible for ensuring that no bait is present before they begin hunting. They should thoroughly inspect the field or marsh, question landowners and guides, and take other reasonable steps to verify the legality of their hunt.

Penalties

Legislators increased the maximum fine for hunting over bait from \$5,000 to \$15,000. They also made the placement of bait a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act punishable by a fine up to \$100,000 for an individual or \$200,000 for an organization, a prison term of up to one year, or both. In the past, individuals who baited fields were charged with "aiding and abetting," that is, helping someone else commit the crime of hunting over bait. They face stiffer penalties under the new law.

ILLINOIS MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NONTOXIC PELLET SIZES^{1,2} FOR HUNTING WATERFOWL 2007

Density (Grams/cc)	Pellet Trade Name	MAX Allowable Pellet Size	Diameter (Inches)
7.86	Steel	T	.200
9.69	Bismuth-Tin	BBB	.190
9.5	Fed. UltraShok High Density	BBB	.190
9.2	Environ-Metal HEVI-Steel	BBB	.190
10.3	Fed. Tungsten/Iron	BB	.180
10.4	Kent Tungsten/Matrix (Impact)	BB	.180
11.1	Fed. Tungsten/Polymer	BB	.180
12.0	Environ-Metal HEVI-Shot	B	.170
12.0	Rem. Wingmaster HD	B	.170
12.0	Win. Xtended Range Hi-Density	B	.170
12.0	Environ-Metal Dead Coyote!	B	.170
13.0	Environ-Metal HEVI-13	1	.160
15.0	Federal Heavyweight	3	.140

1. Table Courtesy Tom Roster and CONSEP. Updated March 1, 2006.

2. Based on No. T steel being the maximum permissible in steel shot.

T.I.P.



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